

THE MILITARY FAMILIES  
FINANCIAL SECURITY ACT

**HON. SUSAN A. DAVIS**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, July 18, 2003*

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Military Families Financial Security Act. This bill will ensure that the brave men and women who serve our country will not have to worry about losing the critical services their children need.

The men and women who serve in our Armed Forces are everyday heroes. I know about the valor of military families from my own experience as a military wife when my husband was stationed in Japan during the Vietnam War. As a wife and mother in a foreign country with two young children, I was truly grateful for the support of other military families. The most striking quality of these families was the sense of pride in serving our country even in a time of strife and stress. I can honestly say that I met extraordinary individuals in extraordinary circumstances.

The resilience and patriotism of military families is inspirational. Their unwavering courage in answering the call to serve our country is even more inspiring when one realizes that many of these men and women are leaving families back home. We must remember that many of our service personnel also answer to the title of "mom" or "dad." Just as these brave men and women are working to protect our Nation, we must likewise protect them and their loved ones through the laws and policies we enact.

In San Diego and around the country, many military families who have children with disabilities rely on assistance from the Federal Government to help cover the costs of health care, day care, and care for special needs. Eligible families receive Supplemental Security Income, or SSI, to ease the financial burden. However, these military families are in danger of losing this much-needed assistance because of a bureaucratic quirk. They face a unique risk of losing their benefits because service members can receive numerous types of additional pay that can increase their income. The Social Security Administration regards this extra pay differently than extra pay for non-military employment. Since eligibility for SSI is based on income, the difference of a few dollars can mean having health care or no care at all.

The Military Families Financial Security Act would change how the Social Security Administration calculates income to determine eligibility for Supplemental Security Income. This simple change in the treatment of income will keep families eligible for SSI benefits and resolve an existing disparity between military and non-military families.

In addition, the Military Families Financial Security Act would also expand SSI eligibility to disabled children who are born to or who apply for benefits while living with parents who are military personnel stationed outside the United States. Currently, children of military personnel stationed overseas are eligible for SSI if they received SSI while they were in the United States. Such an extension would eliminate the disparate treatment of children of military personnel who were born or became blind or disabled outside of the United States.

With our sailors and soldiers in harm's way, there is not a worse time for them to be concerned about whether loved ones are getting the care they need. This legislation offers them the peace of mind that comes with knowing their families will always have the critical support they need.

I urge my colleagues in Congress to act quickly in passing the Military Families Financial Security Act into law.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
AND RELATED AGENCIES APPRO-  
PRIATIONS ACT, 2004

SPEECH OF

**HON. JAMES L. OBERSTAR**

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, July 17, 2003*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2691) making appropriations for the Department of the Interior and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2004, and for other purposes:

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the amendment offered by the gentleman from Washington, Mr. INSLEE, on the roadless rule. We have debated this general issue repeatedly in this chamber over a number of years. Amendments have been offered by well-intentioned members who are not informed about the specifics of the highly diverse units of the national forest system and the unique circumstances which characterize access in each of those forests, as well as the composition of the forestry resources in each unit.

The Superior and Chippewa National Forests, which are located in my congressional district, have undergone extensive study, review, adjustment in status and addition of acreage to roadless or not-cut status. Over the last forty years, these two national forest units, which represent well over 3.6 million acres of federal lands, have been subjected to the Wilderness Act of 1964, the RARE I and RARE II inventories, the old growth inventory, the passage of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness Act of 1978, the result of which, in each case, has been removal from timber harvesting of tens of thousands of acres of forested land to be reserved for wilderness status, protected from timber harvesting and in which motorized travel is precluded in all but a very few instances.

In the aftermath of these actions to remove vast acreages from timber harvesting, and in light of management plans that the U.S. Forest Service is required to produce every five years, each of which has resulted in reduction of the allowable timber harvest, or some further complete withdrawal of land from timber harvesting, I see no need arbitrarily in the context of this straight jacket-like approach to which we are limited in the appropriation process, to impose further restrictions in a one-size-fits-all process.

Furthermore, the mapping required of these public lands has not been fully accurate, as evidenced in a ruling just this week by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 10th Circuit, situated in Wyoming, that the maps produced by the Forest Service were flawed, the process

was rushed and the end result wrong. The court found that in developing the rule: "The Forest Service violated the National Environmental Policy Act and the Wilderness Act." The court further found that the promulgated rule was an "aggrandizement of power by the Forest Service in violation of an unequivocal Act of Congress and the United States Constitution."

I can assure my colleagues that, in the Superior and Chippewa National Forests, there are well over a million acres devoted to wilderness, vast areas for those who seek solitude and the restorative quality of the water and lands set aside from mechanized intrusion. Furthermore, the non-wilderness areas of these two national forests are well and carefully managed in a most professional and responsible manner in an open, public process by the U.S. Forest Service and I see no compelling case for converting additional thousands of multiple-use acres to wilderness in these two forests.

ON THE DEATH OF CELIA CRUZ

**HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, July 18, 2003*

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, today, I mourn the death of my great friend, the music icon, Celia Cruz, who lost her courageous battle with cancer yesterday afternoon.

In fact, today, the entire world mourns.

After 50 years of her presence, influence and music, her loss is shocking to all of us, her dedicated fans.

Celia Cruz, whose music crossed ethnic, racial and cultural lines and earned her five Grammy's and two Latin Grammy's, was a true trailblazer. Her music was a unifying force, and her passion for a free Cuba was evidenced in both her music and her words.

Her commitment to a free Cuba went so far that, during a performance at the Summit of the Americas, she worked the following unforgettable lines into one of her songs: 'Mr. President, please make sure that my homeland Cuba is free once more.' Poignant and heartbreaking words that describe her love for Cuba, her commitment to a free and democratic Cuba, and her affection for her adopted homeland, the United States.

Celia Cruz mesmerized audiences for five decades with her exceptional singing talent and her wonderful charisma. She has been one of the single greatest influences on salsa music, recording more than 70 albums, and receiving more than 100 awards.

She was honored with a star on Hollywood's Walk of Fame, and with streets named after her in New York, Mexico, Costa Rica and Miami, on the famous Calle Ocho. Celia has received honorary degrees from Yale, Florida International University, the University of Miami, and received the National Medal of Arts, the highest honor bestowed on an artist by the United States.

Celia Cruz was born and raised in the Santa Suárez neighborhood of Havana, Cuba. As a young girl, she spent much of her spare time entertaining her peers, friends, and neighbors by singing lullabies and melodies. In the 1940's, she officially began her musical career by singing on numerous Cuban radio programs. After studying at Havana's Conservatory of Music from 1947 to 1950, she joined